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Official Records

Co-Chairperson. Ms. Tarja Halonen (President of the Republic of Finland)
Co-Chairperson. Mr. Sam Nujoma (President of the Republic of Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Statement by the Co-Chairpersons

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): Before proceeding to the list of speakers, I will read the statement by the Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly, welcoming the Inter-Korean Summit and the Follow-up Measures.

"The Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit welcome the summit meeting held in Pyongyang in June this year between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and their Joint Declaration as a major breakthrough in bringing peace, stability and reunification to the Korean peninsula, and encourage the two parties to advance the process of dialogue so that it may eventually lead to the peaceful reunification of the peninsula, while contributing to the peace and security of the region and beyond."

Addresses on the occasion of the Summit *(continued)*

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of the Latvia.

President Vike-Freiberga *(spoke in French):* At the dawning of the third millennium this Summit inspires us to reflect on our future and on the role that

the United Nations must continue to play to improve the human condition the world over. May I congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan on the numerous and highly commendable initiatives that he has introduced and supported as Secretary-General.

I wish to turn immediately to the important fields in which challenges remain to be met.

(spoke in English)

Globalization presents a major challenge to the United Nations, involving as it does, almost by definition, every nation on this planet. The continuing spread of technological and other improvements is providing new opportunities to advance human societies and to create higher living standards across the planet. However, in many countries, poverty and want show little sign of decreasing, and may even be worsened by some aspects of globalization. Not surprisingly, this has created widespread disaffection against the very process.

The United Nations, as a global and international Organization, can play a major role in ensuring a more equitable distribution of the resources generated through globalization. It can draw on the unique strengths of its universality and neutrality, and on its established, on-the-ground presence in numerous countries.

These strengths allow the United Nations to make objective assessments of the difficulties in each particular country and to prescribe remedial courses of

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action in partnership with the Governments concerned. However, the plethora of United Nations bodies with differing mandates has become unwieldy, difficult to manage and confusing. In some cases, the configuration of the United Nations presence does not match the requirements of a particular country.

The United Nations must therefore strengthen its coordinating role and streamline its institutions. It must focus on results and impact. It must develop assistance programmes without competition, overlap or waste. The United Nations must reassess its resource-allocation policies, which, in some cases, have proven most wasteful and ineffective. It is one thing to oppose conditionality, but there should be no objections to stricter accountability and tighter follow-up requirements, thus ensuring that any aid received is well and truly spent on the purposes it had been destined for.

The United Nations must also reassess its military peacekeeping operations, not all of which have been successful. Recently, 500 United Nations soldiers were captured and then released by rebel forces in Sierra Leone. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Nations peacekeeping efforts have not attained their objectives. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Rwanda, United Nations peacekeepers became passive witnesses to wide-scale slaughter and atrocities and, just this morning again, we heard about tragedies in East Timor.

There is little purpose in passing peacekeeping resolutions that cannot be implemented. Perhaps we should prepare for worst-case scenarios and arm the United Nations forces for more muscular peace enforcement, rather than send in lightly armed troops who cannot intervene in serious armed conflict. The report of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations contains constructive recommendations that are well worth considering. This is one major issue that will have to be addressed by the Security Council.

Regarding the reform of the Security Council itself, Latvia agrees that such reforms are urgently needed in order to make that important organ better reflect existing realities.

It is my pleasure to announce that, within Latvia's modest possibilities, my country has donated a beautiful and fully renovated building in the old town of Riga, the capital city, for the use of the United Nations organizations in Latvia. As a donor country,

Latvia is also increasing its contributions to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and covering UNDP's local office costs. In addition, Latvia is once again making a voluntary contribution to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Latvia believes that, at the turn of the millennium, the United Nations Member Governments must work seriously to render this Organization more efficient and effective in the common fight against poverty, war, corruption, lawlessness and torture and in the promotion of human rights. We must concentrate our efforts on transforming the United Nations into an efficient problem-solving and development-oriented Organization that people can truly trust and rely upon. May it truly come to pass.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Natsagiyn Bagabandi, President of Mongolia.

President Bagabandi (*spoke in Mongolian; English text furnished by the delegation*): Mongolia views this unprecedented gathering of world leaders as an event of historic importance that offers us a unique opportunity to reaffirm our faith in the United Nations and to formulate our shared vision on how collectively to address the pressing challenges, both existing and emerging. The United Nations has consistently manifested its undisputed authority in identifying ways and means to address major global problems. Yet, the need to reform and adapt the United Nations to the evolving international realities, with a view to ensuring its efficient functioning in the era of globalization, appears to have been universally recognized.

Some important steps to this end have already been taken. However, the reform process, particularly the Security Council reform, has a tendency to slow down and there is therefore an apparent need to take appropriate measures to accelerate it. Mongolia is in favour of a just and equitable enlargement of the Security Council by increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent seats and ensuring representation of developing and developed countries alike. We also favour the democratization of international relations through increased openness and transparency in the work of the Security Council and an enhanced role of the General Assembly, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter.

In carrying out its activities in the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations

should give priority to preventive diplomacy, especially in matters pertaining to international and internal disputes and conflicts. In this respect, further enhancement of the relevant international mechanisms appears to be crucial. Furthermore, ensuring the universality of international instruments concerning disarmament, crime prevention, human rights, the environment and other fields requires further collaborative efforts and a strong display of political will by all the stakeholders.

As the Secretary-General rightly pinpoints in his millennium report, the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. Today, not only do ideas of globality pervade the language of politicians, economists and researchers the world over; globalization as a reality has generated a host of multifaceted challenges beyond the reach of a single nation. It has become more evident that, along with greater opportunities, globalization has created situations of heightened vulnerability. This is all the more true for the weak and poor nations and leads to their further marginalization.

The question is how to manage the inevitable process of globalization so that it incorporates the human dimension in its seemingly unruly trends. Mongolia believes that, with its impartiality and universal legitimacy, as well as its Charter-based prevalence over any other international agreement, the United Nations is uniquely placed to provide an overarching general guidance to the process of globalization so that its benefits may be enjoyed by all, especially the small States.

No matter how liberal the world economy is becoming, it is a matter of fact that many developing countries have found themselves handicapped in seeking to enjoy the fruits of global liberalization. Therefore, it is our considered view that countries in a disadvantaged location, facing specific difficulties and serious constraints in their development efforts, need the closer attention and support of the international community. Proceeding from this premise, Mongolia has circulated as an official document of the United Nations the memorandum of its Government on how to enhance the role of the Organization in promoting the security interests of small States. We would appreciate the inputs and support of the other Members regarding our initiative.

Mongolia fully shares the Secretary-General's call upon us, the Member States, to spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in pursuing the threefold freedom identified in the millennium report. The honourable mission of ensuring human security and promoting human-centred development should remain high on the agenda of the world Organization. In recognition of the crucial role of education in human development, Mongolia reiterates its conviction of the need to launch a United Nations literacy decade to marshal strong political will and determination towards ensuring lifelong education for all.

Mongolia fully supports the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a health inter-network with 10,000 on-line sites in developing countries to provide access to up-to-date medical information and to ensure reliable and fast communications in disaster-stricken areas.

Over the last decade, Mongolia has developed democratic institutions in the political, economic and social spheres, while promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and pursuing an open and multi-pillared foreign policy.

The new Parliament and Government of Mongolia, which were formed following the general elections held last July, are resolved to vigorously pursue the programme of action designed to revive and encourage the national economy, ensure sustained economic growth, upgrade the living standards of the people, and reduce poverty and unemployment in close cooperation with the international community.

May I express my confidence that this Summit will yield a common strategy for the world community to collectively work in the new century towards a safer, more equitable and prosperous future.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Mr. Bouteflika (spoke in French): Although it has become commonplace to talk about the astonishing progress made in science and technology, it is nevertheless true that the effects of that progress on our daily lives and on our societies are not yet fully known. Those unknown effects can lead to speculation of the wildest sort. The conquest of space and the often

striking advances in genetics could give one the impression that man now has unlimited power over nature and the universe. However, those achievements have also allowed the continued existence of the ills that beset the majority of mankind and for which we have yet to find solutions.

Advances in communications that would have seemed unimaginable just a few years ago have certainly shrunk our world. But have those advances similarly increased the feeling of solidarity among human beings and between peoples? We know that this shrinking of our universe is leading inexorably towards globalization, from which none of us will be able to escape. We also know that it foretells a real shake-up in the behaviour and structures of our societies and the international community as a whole.

Such changes are worrisome because of their scope, their suddenness and, above all, because they seem to be independent of our own will. We must adapt to those changes or be condemned to remain on the fringes of modern life, unable to ascertain the future or to act on it. Will we be able to maintain a semblance of free will in this mad pursuit into which we are being dragged by the new discoveries in science and technology? Will we be able to make our own choices, set our own priorities, and preserve the moral values on which our civilizations have been built?

The legitimate fears aroused by these questions are even more acute in our underdeveloped countries, where our economic, social and even cultural structures are more vulnerable to these assaults by progress and to the constraints of a globalization that is creeping progressively but inevitably into our daily lives and that daily decreases the scope of our freedom. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, we therefore wonder with the greatest concern about the place our countries will occupy in tomorrow's world, a world based on the implacable law of power and governed by the inflexible rules of the market. Will we still be able to make our voices heard in the debates that will decide our future, or will we lapse into some sort of disguised servitude in which we will once again become the objects — either consciously or not — of schemes that will by and large exclude us?

The idea of democracy has made its way in the world and is beginning to permeate political life in our countries. Democratic culture is spreading throughout social classes as the intellectual level of our

populations increases. Conversely, international life is increasingly moving away from democratic practices as decision-making power is being concentrated in the hands of the great Powers, especially in those of the developed countries.

But here again, things are changing. Under globalization, even political decisions are governed by economic considerations. This brings into play the financial interests of multinational corporations and highlights the market forces that now govern traditional diplomacy. As has been said, old negotiators no longer play any role other than that of being mere baggage handlers to high-flying banks and multinationals.

In a word, the world is becoming de-humanized, and that is the source of the anguish I referred to that is felt by all countries of the South and which for us is characteristic of our entry into the third millennium. While prosperity is increasing in rich countries and becoming more promising, our countries are floundering in underdevelopment that we absolutely cannot overcome because of the weight of endless debt. Will we one day be able to free ourselves from this crushing subservience and finally be able to devote our resources to our development and the well-being of our populations? From now on we are bound to a system of expanded, unequal and mercilessly marginalizing competition.

We would like to convey here our feeling of deep helplessness, not to tarnish the excitement we share with everyone else at seeing human beings extend their power and domination over nature, but to warn about the price that will have to be paid if the majority of mankind were to be marginalized in an international society based solely on the notion of material profit.

For us, the United Nations remains the Organization best able to take note of our fears and to try to find appropriate answers. The Organization has survived all the hazards of international life. No one can call into question the undeniable service it has rendered to the cause of peace in the world. It will certainly have to submit itself to renovation in order to ensure the preservation of the ideals of justice and peace that were part of its creation. In this regard, the analyses and suggestions contained in the report of the Secretary-General seem to us fully relevant. I would like to refer to just one of the observations contained in the report.

It is clear that the game of international relations that used to be played exclusively among States increasingly involves that which we have agreed to refer to as civil society — represented by non-governmental organizations — and is extending to increasingly diverse fields. I personally think that the role of non-governmental organizations must be acknowledged and that it is in everyone's interest to determine the status of non-governmental organizations in international relations.

Our concerns are numerous and pressing, and time is short. I simply wish to say that I hope that this Summit will lead to an awareness of our nations' difficulties and of the worries of our peoples. Faced with misery and endless distress, we would like to believe in the advent of a world in which the right to dignity is not measured in dollars. We remain deeply convinced that dignity is an essential, absolute and definitive characteristic of the human condition.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus.

President Lukashenka (*spoke in Russian*): The Almighty has endowed States and peoples, just like individuals, with equal rights to freedom, peace, security and a decent life. Yet for many centuries a small group of States has ruled the destinies of the world, regarding other nations and peoples as a mass with no rights.

The great achievement of the United Nations system, as I see it, is that the division of peoples into subjects and objects of international law has been eliminated. Today every State, regardless of its size and resources, has the opportunity to participate on an equal basis in solving the topical problems facing the world community.

The Belarusian people have made a considerable contribution to the establishment of this just system. And we cannot accept any attempts to dictate to us how we should live and with whom we should be friends.

Having sacrificed the lives of one third of its citizens to the cause of victory in the war against fascism, Belarus is capable of determining its own destiny. Having fully experienced the horrors of devastating wars, Belarus cannot be indifferent to the attempts to break the stability of the emerging world

order, to disrupt the geopolitical balance in the world, and bring back the times when States were divided into first- and second-rate countries.

The proposals of the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Annan, which are aimed at increasing the Organization's efficiency, evoke our profound interest.

In implementing these proposals it is important, as we say, not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. The aims and principles of the United Nations Charter should be preserved. Only under these conditions can we ensure that the Organization's activity yields practical results and that it is capable of effectively responding to the global challenges of our time.

I think everybody will agree that with all the diversity of the goals of the United Nations, the main task of the Organization is to ensure international peace and security.

For the time being, unfortunately, the United Nations is not fully able to deal with the task of preventing aggression and armed conflicts. The cases where military force was used, bypassing the United Nations Security Council, have not resolved any issues, but have only aggravated existing problems. Belarus holds the view that military force cannot be a legitimate instrument of foreign policy in the twenty-first century.

The intention to make the world a safer place was the main motive behind our decision to renounce the status of a nuclear State.

I do not understand those countries who speak so insistently about the threat of nuclear proliferation, sometimes from this rostrum, but at the same time do not want to take on the responsibility of making Central and Eastern Europe free of nuclear weapons, as proposed by Belarus on many occasions.

I avail myself of this opportunity to draw the attention of the world leaders present here today to the problem of environmental protection and the responsibility of large and small nations in that area.

Many in the world have already started to forget the greatest man-made disaster of the past century — the Chernobyl disaster — whose main victim was Belarus. The moral duty of the United Nations is to mobilize world resources for dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl and other ecological disasters. Without awareness of our joint responsibility

for preserving the common human environment, all discussions of a fair distribution of the benefits and disadvantages of globalization will remain just shallow talk.

Human rights and democracy are the central issues of the Millennium Summit. I believe that nobody in this hall would question the significance of these values and high standards, which are set out in United Nations documents.

The problem is that human rights and democracy are increasingly often being used by some States as a pretext for punishing objectionable countries and nations.

Recently, efforts have been made to create a sort of "club of the elect", which excludes the majority of the world's nations. This arrogant attempt to divide the peoples into "teachers" and "pupils" can do no good for the real encouragement of democracy and human rights.

In conclusion, I would like to draw your attention to the necessity for a more deferential attitude to the unique nature, existing way of life and historical destiny of every nation.

For the time being, unfortunately, in international relations we are facing more frequent attempts of the bigger Powers to treat all alike and reject any national and regional features which do not fall into the customary framework of the "Western way of life".

I doubt whether the overwhelming majority of the United Nations would agree with such arrogance.

Belarus is in the mainstream of democratic development. But in promoting democracy we rely, and shall continue to rely, on our own way of life and national spiritual traditions which have been maturing over centuries.

This is why we manage to combine development, democracy and stability. There are not and have never been any religious or ethnic conflicts in our country. Our borders are the borders of peace and cooperation. We are open to friendship and cooperation with all those who respect our country and people.

Addressing the United Nations from this high rostrum, I declare that in the new millennium my country shall continue to be your reliable partner in promoting the cause of peace and security on the planet.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to make an appeal. Members are aware that there are still several speakers remaining on the list of speakers for this meeting. Since we must exhaust the list for each meeting, I should like to appeal to the participants in the Millennium Summit to respect as much as possible the five-minute speaking time allotted to each speaker. This would allow us to hear all the speakers on the list.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Thomas Klestil, Federal President of the Republic of Austria.

President Klestil: This assembly of world leaders is a unique occasion to celebrate and reaffirm our unity of purpose and our support for the United Nations. Guided by the Secretary-General's Millennium Report, we are also called upon to explore the longer-term necessities and options of development in our community of nations. Arnold Toynbee's theory of history as the result of "challenges" and the respective "responses" offers a suitable approach for analysing the United Nations.

Built on the ashes of the disastrous Second World War, the Organization's agenda and mode of operation have evolved in response to the issues of each decade. It is amazing how the world Organization, over more than half a century, has been able to provide valuable leadership in promoting peace and security; in successfully supporting the decolonization process; in promoting and protecting a global system of human rights standards; in transforming itself, in part, into a broad-based programme of development cooperation; in articulating and addressing the new global agenda as it has evolved, dealing with population growth, human rights, social development, the role of women in our societies, natural resources and sustainable development and food and health, all issues that were the subjects of world conferences during the past decade.

This Summit also offers a special opportunity to thank all those men and women who have served the United Nations with great dedication and distinction — especially those who have lost their lives in the defence of high goals and ideals. A special tribute is due to the Secretaries-General of the Organization, from Trygve Lie, Dag Hammarskjöld, U Thant, Kurt Waldheim, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Kofi Annan. Coming from a country which hosts one

of the main centres of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, I should like to convey my profound appreciation for the enthusiasm and idealism of the staff, which has been a major resource for the development of the world Organization.

One of the most significant achievements of the recent past has been the increasing democratization of global affairs. The Secretary-General, making an allusion to the Charter, rightly entitled his report (A/54/2000) "We the peoples" and not "We the Governments". Over the past 30 years, it may have been peoples more than Governments that shaped and promoted the agenda of the United Nations. Especially since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in 1972 at Stockholm, we have benefited from a dynamic interrelationship between diplomatic negotiations on the one hand and the articulations of international civil society on the other. Today, it might well be unthinkable to deal with any global issue without the participation and contributions of civil society. The way we address today issues of human rights, of the environment, of disaster relief and development cooperation, of security and, in particular, of human security, to mention only a few, is characterized by new forms of dialogue, participation and commitment on the part of civil society. Neither the successful completion of the negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction nor the Rome process towards an International Criminal Court would have been possible without the truly innovative and productive response on their part.

I should also like to welcome the recent initiative by the Secretary-General to develop a new partnership with the business community. To face the challenges of globalization, a platform like the "Global Compact" — which emerged from the discussion at the World Economic Forum in Davos — can certainly make a valuable contribution to addressing global issues and the broad societal responsibilities they entail.

Over the past decades the United Nations has shown impressive flexibility and an ability to carry out institutional innovation. However, if we review the past development of United Nations organs and organizations, we have to admit that much of this was rather sectoral, ad hoc and always under the constraints of budgetary limitations. In short, I believe that the most important question put before us by the Secretary-

General relates to the institutional development of the United Nations. It is there that great efforts are required and that innovative responses will have to be found to make real a renewed United Nations in a global neighbourhood of peace and development for all.

Keeping in mind the complex interrelationships that exist today among the manifold dimensions of peace and security, of economic and human-centred development and of environmental sustainability, our approach to the institutional challenge will have to be more comprehensive than in the past. The new challenges in dealing with the global agenda require new intersectoral, interdisciplinary, broad-based institutional responses. This implies that our approach to the challenge of renewing the United Nations must not be limited to a specific function, to a specific organ or even to a specific organization. The time has come to understand the institutional development of the United Nations as comprehending the entire global agenda, the entire system of organizations, and all types of actors: Governments, the academic community, civil society, parliamentary representatives and business leaders.

The millennium is a good moment to begin, and this Summit is an excellent occasion to gather the necessary political will and momentum. No quick fixes are possible. All elements in our global society must participate and share in the responsibility for our common future. With the goal of implementing the fundamental objectives of the Charter, we must establish the institutions appropriate for the agenda of our time.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

King Mswati III: I am delighted to represent the Swazi nation at this historic Millennium Summit. The entire membership of the United Nations has gathered together for these three days to agree on how our Organization must adapt in order to assist its Members to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is presenting its proposals for the future role of the United Nations to enable the Organization to support us more efficiently in our efforts to meet the development priorities of our people.

We will be discussing much-needed changes in the structure, accountability and operations of the Organization. But the Summit also provides the perfect opportunity to address the issue of global relationships and, in particular, how to correct the imbalance of wealth and social standards between the North and the South. In this increasingly interdependent world, it is more important than ever for Member States to work together in unity and with respect for one another's individual viewpoints, regardless of size, influence and economic strength.

We hope that the Summit will reconfirm the agreement of all Members that concepts such as globalization are intended as a way for all countries to benefit evenly from the new world order, and not as a means of continuing domination by the strong over the weak. And we would expect the needs of the developing world to be treated seriously, with a commitment from our partners to support our priority objectives in an open and honest manner, while respecting national wishes and beliefs, and without conditions that undermine sovereignty and independence.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has three major concerns that we believe require United Nations leadership in the twenty-first century. These involve the acceptance of responsibility by the Organization, acceptance of a leading role in conflict prevention and resolution; in resource mobilization for development priorities; and in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

From an African perspective, it is a fact that conflicts and instability on our continent not only cause immense suffering to those directly involved, but can also have a negative effect on the rest of our people. We therefore fully support the call by the Secretary-General for the United Nations to work hand in hand with regional groupings to prevent potential conflict by addressing the root causes of problems.

In the global effort to eradicate poverty, we believe the United Nations must take a much stronger position in helping developing countries mobilize financial resources with which to implement their priority projects, especially in job creation and essential infrastructure.

And finally, with the terrible threat of HIV/AIDS casting its shadow over the start of this new century, there is surely an urgent need for the United Nations to take the lead in the global fight against this powerful

enemy of mankind. Because of AIDS, approximately one quarter of my people will not survive beyond the next 10 years and this is a fate they share with all too many others in the developing world. We must acknowledge that AIDS is a far greater threat to global stability than even the great wars of the last century. We have to act now to stop the spread of AIDS, before its devastating effects overtake those of the current conflicts on which we concentrate so much of our attention and resources. Among all the worthy talk of United Nations restructuring, let this message on HIV/AIDS be strong, focused and resource-oriented. This is truly a role that the United Nations must play in this century, if it is to fulfil its mandate to the people it serves.

The Kingdom of Swaziland places great faith and hope in the success of this Summit. Our people deserve the fullest commitment of all Member States to recreate an Organization that lives up to the ideals of our founding Charter. We have the opportunity now to set the United Nations on the right course for the rest of the century. The Kingdom of Swaziland stands ready to play its full part in the process.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Andrés Pastrana Arango, President of the Republic of Colombia.

President Pastrana Arango (spoke in Spanish): I come to this historic Summit today not only as President of my country, but also as the voice of 500 million inhabitants of this planet who live in the 33 States of Latin America and the Caribbean that form the Rio Group, of which I am today the Secretary pro tempore.

In their name, I proclaim the following.

We aspire to be, above all, a region of peace.

We value the protection of human rights, in their full concept, and of the environment, since protecting both is a way of defending man.

We reject all forms of intolerance and discrimination.

We exalt solidarity and cooperation as the values that should guide us in the twenty-first century.

And we therefore declare that the United Nations is the most important world Organization, and it is our duty to strengthen and increase its capacity. We

therefore support a multilateralism that always acts within the framework of the United Nations as the prime regulator of world order, and we consider unacceptable any international action taken outside the legal framework of the Organization's Charter or any reform that would be to the detriment of the Organization's social agenda.

We in Latin America and the Caribbean declare that we are supporters of and committed to democracy and respect for human rights as the guiding principles of the new international order. This is what we, the Presidents of the Rio Group countries, asserted in Cartagena when we signed a "Commitment to Democracy", and when all the Presidents of South America ratified it less than a week ago in Brasilia.

With the authority to which we are entitled as the world's first major nuclear-weapon-free region, Latin America and the Caribbean strives to create a world free of the nuclear threat and of other weapons of mass destruction. We also support the upcoming international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and we condemn the use of excessively cruel and inhumane weapons, especially "home-made" weapons.

Avoiding war is a priority and a matter of urgency, but where conflict already exists we must at least observe the rules of international humanitarian law. Colombia firmly stands by its positions, and I am proud to be able to say that today there is no one under age serving in our armed forces.

In order to secure a firmer future for generations to come, we must also show courage and determination in facing the global problem of unlawful drugs and related crimes such as money-laundering, the trafficking in and diversion of chemical precursors, contraband, and arms dealing. The Rio Group is convinced that this is a problem for all, and that it must be solved by all in a global effort which should be based on the principle of shared responsibility.

It is our duty to foster the conditions so that the globalization process of the last 10 years can be controlled, humanized and made equitable. In these new circumstances, trade and finance cannot lose sight of human beings and their needs. In Latin America and the Caribbean there are more than 200 million poor who hope to share the benefits of progress, and we cannot leave them behind. What we seek is growth with social equity.

For this, we need international cooperation to finance the networks of social protection and the investment in human capital and the infrastructure. We need to increase the flow of international trade and put an end to the protectionist measures of the wealthier and more developed countries.

In sum, we need a new architecture for the international financial system which will help to secure stability and provide assistance and support for countries which are undergoing a process of adjustment.

I come from Colombia, a beautiful country inhabited by 40 million people who love life and where, unfortunately, an absurd confrontation persists, fuelled by a few violent persons and by tainted drug-traffic money that affects and involves the entire world. But we are committed to the quest of a negotiated peace. We are possessed by a desire to achieve greater social justice for our most needy. We are determined to combat drug-trafficking and to fight for human rights. We have been living in democracy for over 180 years and we shall continue to live in democracy. We are the future. We are the promise. We are a land of hope and friendship. On the shoulders of our heroes, suffering the anguish of our poor, trusting in the talents of our people, we are, in the words of our Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez, striving for a second chance on the earth, and I have no doubt that we shall obtain it.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gustavo Noboa Bejarano, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador.

President Noboa Bejarano (*spoke in Spanish*): Since its creation the United Nations has been a universal meeting place of States to work for the shared ideals and objectives of all peoples. Today it is welcoming the largest number of heads of State and Government from all the regions of the world. This undoubtedly constitutes an acknowledgement of the full validity of the multilateral system of relations among States when, in the globalized world, the individual action of Governments yields to the collective treatment of global policy and strategies for effective and united management of international affairs.

The globalization process is developing independently of the great objectives of security,

economic stability and development. The debt problem and the financial market crises have weakened the possibilities of economic stability and development. The causes of alarming levels of poverty and misery in the majority of countries are increasingly found beyond national borders and a nation's control, since Governments have less leeway to apply policies that mitigate unemployment and inequality, heightened by external circumstances and by non-humanitarian globalization. Violence, drug trade, terrorism and the deterioration of the environment have all burst forth as global phenomena that threaten all humankind, and international measures have not yet been taken to offset the effects of a system which for now is clearly one of profit and fierce competition and is dehumanizing in its very essence.

In recent years we have been witnesses to the worsening of regional conflicts. Wars have left deep and lasting scars in different parts of the world. Grave violations of basic human rights and international humanitarian law remain in evidence. The stockpiling and unjustifiable development of nuclear weapons and other weapons of destruction continue as a constant threat to humankind.

The successes of the United Nations throughout its years of existence place great expectations on its performance in the twenty-first century. Our ability to strengthen the Organization to respond to new challenges depends on the historic commitment that we are able to offer today to the Organization and to collective action for the benefit of a universal project of change, understanding and cooperation. Overturning the negative trends of globalization is the new challenge of the United Nations.

Working hard for the overall development of its nation, Ecuador firmly appeals to international cooperation for the implementation of programmes aimed at debt alleviation and reduction of the external debt for developing countries that are highly indebted. Debt-servicing, consuming over 50 per cent of the national budget in some countries, conspires against the implementation of health, education, employment and environmental programmes and programmes for the well-being of the poorest segments of the population. Ecuador urgently calls for agreements to forgive the heavy external debt. Moreover, emphasis must also be placed on international financing for development on a foreseeable and continued basis. We

must also ensure effective assistance through the resources of international institutions.

With regard to efforts to renew the United Nations, Ecuador also attaches priority to the reform of the Security Council in its composition and its working methods. Its primary mission in maintaining international peace and security requires adaptations to correct imbalances in its present composition so as to improve decision-making mechanisms and to give greater transparency to its proceedings.

I am pleased to reaffirm at this Summit Ecuador's firmest support for the multilateral system of international relations and for this universal Organization, the United Nations. We have begun a new millennium and the hope of humankind to live in a more secure, just and democratic world, depending on the shared action of all countries, which puts our universal political will, solidarity and commitment to the test.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique.

President Chissano: It was with great pride and satisfaction that we in Mozambique received the Secretary-General's report on the Millennium Assembly and realized that it touches upon the most pressing challenges faced by the peoples of the world today. These include the promotion of a culture of peace within and among nations and among regions throughout the world, for this will allow the accomplishment of all other objectives such as poverty eradication, development, human rights, promotion and protection, as well as meeting the challenges of globalization. Developing countries, particularly the least developed ones, are facing serious difficulties in their efforts to integrate themselves into the world economy. By liberalizing trade and finance, the globalization process has exposed the poor countries to powerful external forces and has driven them to marginalization and exclusion. This results in serious economic asymmetries, leading to a widening gap between the rich North and the poor South, not only in economic terms, but also in terms of technology and knowledge, a trend leading to greater inequalities.

The alarming figures on poverty in the Secretary-General's report are indeed embarrassing to us as world leaders. Looking at the stage of development the world

has reached today, with some societies living in conditions of extreme abundance, the prevalence of absolute poverty in the world is morally unacceptable. We have to reverse the current trend in the international economic system and create one which brings about justice, equal opportunities and benefits for all peoples in the world. If the scourge of poverty is not addressed, it can shake the very foundations of the current international system. We therefore call upon the international community to harness and manage the globalization phenomenon in order to ensure that all peoples of the world benefit from it.

External debt is a major obstacle to the economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries. While we welcome the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and the Cologne initiatives, as well as other mechanisms for debt relief, we are convinced that unconditional debt cancellation could enable us to redirect resources to poverty eradication, the improvement of social sectors and the rehabilitation of basic infrastructures. Debt cancellation needs to be supplemented by better access to world markets, the provision of adequate development assistance, and foreign direct investments.

We consider the eradication of infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS a key issue for the development and security of the developing countries, especially of the African countries. In my country, we have established a national committee that involves all stakeholders in the implementation of the programme to combat HIV/AIDS.

The advancement of knowledge, science and technology — in particular information and communication technology — are essential for economic growth and development. The lack of access to technology widens the gap between developed and developing countries. Therefore, technology should be made available to developing countries at affordable prices, with adequate human capacity-building to enable them to appropriate and further develop it to the benefit of their peoples.

Our desires and aspirations can be realized only in a stable and peaceful environment. It is essential that efforts be intensified in the search for genuine disarmament, including the total destruction of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

should be prevented through concerted international efforts.

The role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and international security must be strengthened. The Security Council has to be democratized.

I would like to take this historic opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and that of the people of Mozambique to individual countries and the international community as a whole for the response and support provided to us during the devastating floods in which many lives were lost and infrastructures destroyed. Although factors beyond our control have conditioned its pace, we have already started with the post-flood reconstruction. I am happy to report that most families that were displaced by the floods have been resettled in safe areas. We thank the international community for the efforts deployed to assist us in this phase of reconstruction.

Mozambique has, to a large extent, experienced the positive impact of an effective and coordinated action by the United Nations and the international community at large, in times both of peace and of conflict. It is our earnest hope that the United Nations will be reformed as soon as possible and strengthened in such a way that its effectiveness is enhanced. The implementation of the decisions to be adopted at this historic Summit requires the establishment of follow-up mechanisms or reinforcement of the existing ones.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

President Nazarbaev (spoke in Russian): It is quite clear that the new millennium not only is bringing us global changes but that it also marks a watershed in the existence of humankind. There is no question that globalization is a dominant and irreversible trend of our time. However, today it is also unquestionable that globalization, which is shaping the contours of the new world order and is clearly a manifestation of progress, can also have quite a few negative implications for many, if not most, States.

There are a number of factors at play here, chief among them being the stark inequality between States of the world community. This is reflected even in the words we use on a daily basis to express the varying

degree of that inequality. Thus, we speak of "rich" and "poor" States, "developed" and "economically backward" States, nations endowed with a resource potential and those that have already exhausted it, and so forth.

Inequality also manifests itself in the pattern of resource consumption. Developed countries, known to account for 20 per cent of the world's population, consume 80 per cent of global resources. There is also a widely known forecast to the effect that, given the current pace of development, the global economy over the next few decades can provide employment for only 20 per cent of the world's able-bodied population. And this is only one of the global challenges of the new millennium.

In this context, I believe that both the United Nations and national Governments must make mutual commitments. First, each country should clearly and responsibly define its position with respect to globalization processes in order to envision and, as far as possible, neutralize their possible negative manifestations. Secondly, as part of its work to modernize its activity, the United Nations could undertake the priority task of developing a model of globalization that would integrate to the fullest degree the interests of all marginalized countries. At the same time, it should more adequately address the concerns of most peoples in the developed countries, since the disparities within those countries will inevitably continue to grow. This model should also incorporate measures to enhance the effectiveness of existing security systems and develop new ones that would meet the demands of our times. It is no secret that, despite some major accomplishments, the United Nations has not always been successful in addressing the challenges of maintaining peace and security.

In this regard, along with enhancing the peacemaking potential of the United Nations, first and foremost of the Security Council, it could be a very promising endeavour to utilize the potential of regional security systems and to promote cooperation with them. There is no doubt that such arrangements as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, which is already taking concrete shape, or the Shanghai Five, could in many cases function quite efficiently. The active involvement of regional security systems in the processes of maintaining stability and security could also help take

the edge off the problem of humanitarian intervention. With their assistance and the support of the Security Council, many conflicts could be resolved without gross interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

A pressing need to develop such approaches is demonstrated, among other things, by the process currently under way in Asia. Afghanistan has become one of the sore point spots of the world. More than 20 years after the intervention of the Soviet troops, the long-suffering people of this country continue to experience all the horrors of war. The instability and poverty in this country have turned its territory into a breeding ground for extremism and international terrorism, spreading not only in Central Asia but throughout the world. Afghanistan produces up to 3,000 tons of raw opium annually, which is then processed and shipped to Europe and the United States.

At their recent meeting in Bishkek, the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Russia, discussed this problem and called on the United Nations and the world community to provide their countries assistance in normalizing this situation. We believe it is necessary to convene a special meeting of the Security Council devoted to the situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia to develop practical measures to stabilize the situation.

The threat of nuclear proliferation could also be included on its agenda, since a strong confrontation has developed among some nuclear-weapons States. A number of countries of the region are at the threshold of acquiring these weapons. After the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Kazakhstan inherited a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons. Our country has set a precedent by a voluntary renouncing of this arsenal. That is why today we again call on all nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to eliminate nuclear arms.

As an improvement of the activity of the United Nations in the era of globalization, we believe it would be advisable to promote within its structure such institutions which, on the basis of a global analysis of the situation, could provide early warning about emerging conflicts, formulate recommendations for early intervention and prevent military solutions to conflicts while effectively promoting preventive diplomacy. Such institutions could become an

irreplaceable tool for addressing social and economic problems that are the source of instability.

In late 1943, at the Teheran Conference, where the question of the future world order was first discussed, a great American, President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt, addressed the participants in the Conference with these words:

"We have differing customs and philosophies and ways of life ... But we have proved here in Teheran that the varying ideals of our nations can come together in a harmonious whole, moving unitedly for the common good of ourselves and of the world."

I think that this statement is relevant for us too, as we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, a century of dramatic changes, a century of globalization which, we all hope, will bring common good to humanity as a whole.

The world has become a global and interdependent place where global partnership should become an overriding principle.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal.

President Wade (spoke in French): On this historic occasion where the United Nations community is meeting to celebrate the advent of a new millennium and to reflect together on what should be the role and place of the Organization in the twenty-first century, I wish to bring you a solemn message of peace and friendship from the people of Senegal, and at the same time to express, once again, our deep attachment to the noble ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

I wish above all to pay strong tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the courage, competence and lucidity which he has displayed in the exercise of his mandate. The report he submitted to us provides us with a broad range of ideas and relevant proposals, providing a consensus view of the United Nations, firmly committed to the pillars of its Charter, and at the same time, better equipped and adapted to the changing realities of the world.

For my part, I wish to take up here three aspects of the problems faced by the United Nations. The first

challenge is that of establishing global and sustainable peace and security between nations, but also within the nations themselves — security going hand in hand with the elimination of war, violence, hunger, thirst, oppression, poverty and debt.

The Member States have a prime responsibility to create the minimum conditions for "a world free of fear", according to the words of the Secretary-General. Let us therefore agree to establish a world based on the acceptance of the universality of the principles of democracy, the sovereign right of peoples to freely and democratically choose their leaders, the renunciation of violence as a method of gaining and maintaining power, and the rule of law, the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world, without any discrimination of gender, race or religion.

In this regard, I am thinking of all those minorities, somewhere in the world, whose cultures and rights are still being scorned, including their right to live as free citizens.

Decades ago, I had a dream that Africa would cross into the twenty-first century free of all dictatorial or personal power, and with a rich mosaic of genuine democracies, differing only in their cultural elements. We need to recognize, however, that instances of real change, which includes changes in leadership and elections, can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The second aspect in the United Nations problems adds a complementary dimension to those of peace and security, and this is social and economic development — development in a world which is transforming on a global level. And here too, I wish, as before, to mention the debt, this infernal mechanism which developed countries have locked us into. Each generation works to pay off the debts incurred by previous generations, as well as debts of its own, debts for which it is difficult to see any significant trace in Africa.

The drama of the debt is not that it will neither be paid back or cancelled, because these always happen. The debt is a recurring disease which will always come back if the profound causes are not eradicated. It seems something like an indecency, or even a challenge to common reason, to consider debt development the only possible choice for our countries.

At the Lomé Summit, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided to establish the African Union and to take up the question of debt relief for Africa.

The world has to cease being a world where paternalist creditors are facing shivering, timid debtors, who only dare to ask for more time or debt cancellation, whereas they are the victims of an unjust system. The science of economics, supported by a profound feeling of solidarity and interdependence, should lead the international community to share the feeling so well expressed by John Fitzgerald Kennedy — "a free society which is unable to help its poor majority will not be able to save its rich minority".

These issues are reflected in the decision of the OAU to create the African Union. I am happy to announce that Senegal has ratified this agreement, and was the second nation to do so.

The third and last element of response is linked to reform of the United Nations, that the Secretary-General presented in a bold programme for renewal. I feel that the one of the first demands of reform lies in increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, and in the improvement of the working methods of the Council.

It is in all our interests that the Council be more representative of the international community, which requires the reform of the Security Council, the strengthening of the rule of the General Assembly, the rationalization of the work of the other organs, as well as the simplification of the institutional mechanisms and administrative procedures.

Beyond the symbolism of passing from one century to another and from one millennium to the next, we are today at the crossroads and have no other choice but to embark on the path of hope, which leads through the consolidation of multilateralism and universalism. As we meet here today, the daily realities of the world remind us yet again of the unfulfilled nature of our ambitious mission to build peace and promote development throughout our planet.

We cannot fail. We should not fail, because humanity has accumulated an unprecedented stock of scientific knowledge, technical know-how and technologies able to produce way beyond our needs. Good sense rejects the idea of poverty in a world where global wealth is so abundant that, beyond any concept

of redistribution, the elimination of waste alone would most probably eradicate hunger and the lack of humanity's basic needs on most of the planet.

In the face of what borders on intellectual blindness, I wish to express my hope for the emergence of a new rationalism, such as that of the eighteenth century. I myself will seek membership in that society without borders, where absurdity will be abolished and intelligence and the rule of reason, which are optimally distributed among peoples, will be promoted. Just as we speak of the age of enlightenment, we might also refer to the millennium of enlightenment. In the meanwhile, however, may the Lord help and guide us on our way.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Kim Dae-jung, President of the Republic of Korea.

President Kim (*spoke in Korean; interpretation furnished by the delegation*): It is a great privilege for me to have this opportunity to speak in this honoured Hall of peace.

The new millennium is beginning with a miracle on the Korean peninsula. Warm sunshine has begun to melt the wall of ice that has stood between the South and North during the past 55 years of cold-war division. Members must have seen some of the televised scenes of the South-North Korean summit in June, as well as of the separated families reuniting on 15 August for the first time in all those years of national division. They were miraculous and were brought about not only through the efforts of South and North Korea, the principal parties, but also through the steadfast support and encouragement of the United Nations and the leaders of the world. I thank them all wholeheartedly.

Furthermore, I am greatly encouraged by and deeply grateful for the decision of the Co-Chairpersons of our historic gathering to issue a statement in support of the South-North Joint Declaration that the inter-Korean summit produced.

Upon my inauguration two and a half years ago, I embarked upon my sunshine policy in pursuit of inter-Korean peace, reconciliation and cooperation. Since then, the policy has won the support of the United Nations and all countries of the world. In the summit discussions, I and my North Korean counterpart resolved to work together to ensure that there shall

never be another war on the Korean peninsula. We agreed that unification neither by force nor by absorption is acceptable, as both would only lead to war.

We agreed that, while the aspiration towards unification through self-determination will continue to guide us, our efforts for now must focus on bringing lasting peace to the Korean peninsula and promoting economic and sociocultural exchanges and cooperation between the two sides. These efforts are already under way in many areas.

Unification is the ultimate goal of the Korean people. However, unification must be achieved peacefully, no matter how long it takes. Unification must be a success for both sides. This was the agreement reached at the South-North Korean summit. Through exchanges of summit visits and continued ministerial talks, we will do all that we can to expand inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation and to make a peace to last on the Korean peninsula. Such advances on the Korean peninsula will greatly contribute to peace in north-east Asia and the world.

As long as we have the United Nations leading the global support for our efforts on behalf of peace, with the active backing of all the leaders here, the miracle of the new millennium unfolding on the Korean peninsula will become a great achievement for history. In the most earnest terms, I ask representatives for their abiding attention and support.

In the twentieth century, the United Nations achieved shining advances for peace and human welfare. Were it not for the United Nations, how much more would humankind have suffered from wars, calamities and infringements upon human rights. Indeed, I harbour no doubt that the establishment of the United Nations was humanity's greatest feat of the twentieth century.

In the twenty-first century, however, there will be many and even greater missions for the global body to accomplish. Numerous challenges await, such as the realization of world peace, assistance for the economic growth of the developing countries, the promotion of human rights, combating terrorism, and the preservation of the earth's environment. These missions must all be successfully accomplished.

I appeal to all: let us join hands to make the twenty-first century the most peaceful and hopeful

period in the history of humankind. Let us do so by having the countries of the world rally around the United Nations. I assure them that the Republic of Korea will render all the cooperation it can as the United Nations carries out its noble roles.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

President Izetbegovic: First, let me thank the United Nations for organizing this historical gathering. We extend our congratulations to all those contributing. We fully endorse the efforts for a more efficient Organization of the United Nations that would successfully promote the values contained in the draft declaration of the Millennium Summit.

Compared to our long and rich history, the dawn of the new millennium closes an extremely difficult and painful decade for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first half of the decade was marked by a battle for independence and the other half by the reconstruction of the country and its institutions after a bloody and devastating war. The country and the peoples have survived, but at a terrible and unnecessary price.

The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina depends largely on three factors: first, the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina from within; secondly, the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole into the Euro-Atlantic institutions; and, thirdly, on further regional developments overall.

The integration from within is a painful and slow process, but it is headed in the right direction. I am happy to affirm the good will of ordinary people to reconcile and to move forward. The problems are in the lack of commitment on the part of some politicians. As a consequence, too many of our refugees are still waiting to return to their homes and some remnants of apartheid are still present.

We who signed the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement to establish peace have always understood it to be imperfect. However, we also believed it to be evolutionary and a process that would establish Bosnia and Herzegovina as a democratic and open member of the family of European countries. Our integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions — from the Council of Europe to the Partnership for Peace and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) — ensures a stable future for our overall region as well. That

process of integration is the source of our hopes. It enhances this necessary evolution and encourages the vision of a common future for our peoples. However, in the alternative, if the people feel that they are not welcome as full partners in a borderless Europe, the demarcation lines in our region will become ever more pronounced.

In Dayton, our priority was to stop the killing, because there had been too much death. We believed that an imperfect peace would be better than a just war and that the natural integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Euro-Atlantic family would help to overcome the shortcomings of such an initially unjust, as well as imperfect, peace.

Finally, the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina also depends on regional developments, and vice versa. Most recent developments in Croatia have shown how quickly things can change in a positive direction. We would like to see similar positive events with our neighbour to the east. In Montenegro democracy and the recognition of past mistakes go hand in hand. The relationship between our two countries reflects new feelings of goodwill and mutual interests.

We in Bosnia and Herzegovina are very proud to contribute an integrated police force from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the international peacekeeping effort in East Timor. Here I join others in expressing our dismay at the deaths of United Nations personnel in Timor.

Allow me to conclude this short statement on a more personal note. My function in the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina ends this October, after 10 years of service. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all sincere friends of Bosnia and Herzegovina who were with us in the time of war and in the time of peace, and who have always supported the just cause of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I assure the Assembly of the readiness of my country to contribute to the common well-being in order to build a better and more just world. As a crossroads of civilizations, cultures and religions — Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism and Islam — we can contribute much to a new dialogue and culture of peace. Our example teaches what should and should not be done. It is both a positive and negative lesson for future generations.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency

Mr. Francisco Guillermo Flores Pérez, President of the Republic of El Salvador.

President Flores Pérez (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the United Nations, through the Secretary-General, for the proposal at the beginning of this year that the agenda for this Summit should be that of tackling the world's problems. I have discussed that proposal with my Latin American colleagues at various forums, and extend deserved recognition to Mr. Annan for it.

I find in the proposal an appeal to the more developed nations regarding the very acute poverty in which many nations and a large part of the world's population live. If that appeal means a call to solidarity as part of a concept of a global conscience that understands that the problems of others are also our own, then I completely support it. But if it is based on the premise that poor nations exist through the fault of rich nations, then I cannot agree with it. When the attitude of a poor nation towards the world is to blame developed countries for its poverty, then there is a transfer of responsibility that in the end closes off any possibility for that nation to emerge from its poverty. The only possible way for a poor nation to move ahead is to assume full responsibility for confronting its poverty.

We in El Salvador are living in a time of profound transformation because of a successful peace process and a reorientation of our country. The triumphs have been ours, as we were the ones who made peace. But the problems are also ours, as we were the ones who made war. The only way in which we can overcome our problems is by accepting them in full. The same applies to the individual who blames his Government for his present living conditions, while forgetting his personal responsibilities. By transferring to others the responsibility that is ours we block any possibility for change.

We Salvadorans are the architects of our own destiny. Ours are the triumphs and ours are the failures. In our experience, assigning blame in the end promotes an assistance mentality whose most pernicious expression is the temptation of many aid programmes to carry out social engineering experiments within a reality that they do not understand at all. We are therefore not asking the world to solve our problems. What we are asking for is an opportunity to participate on equal terms in development processes.

The policies of openness promoted by industrialized countries and international agencies are valid as long as they mean openness for everyone. If industrialized countries view less developed countries only as consumer markets and close their own markets to our own capacity to produce, they create a distortion that will in the end affect all nations. Salvadoran farmers use all the products produced by industrialized countries. It is absolutely intolerable for the industrialized world to tell them that they cannot sell in the countries of the industrialized world the fruits, vegetables and cereals they produce through their own labour.

There is no better opportunity than this historic gathering to correct that distortion. All that is needed is our determination to raise relations between countries to the level of dignity required for a shared future. Openness is the only sustainable link between us, as it is only on the basis of our production that we can generate the resources to combat poverty. I therefore view that commitment and opportunity with the utmost optimism.

If inhabitants of Europe had been told that they were living during the Renaissance, they would probably have answered in a perplexed manner that the only thing they were living was the daily shared problems of their existence at the time. It may be that we ourselves are today living through another Renaissance, one characterized by a burst of creativity in almost all areas of human knowledge. If so, it would be an enormous waste if we, the leaders of the world, were to apply our energies to grim, apocalyptic visions regarding the threats that will confront mankind. Maybe the most productive way of employing our time would be to dedicate ourselves to effectively managing the world's current potential in an active and responsible spirit of optimism, understanding that today we have tools to move our countries forward that we never had before.

Progress is knowledge and decision — and this is denied to no one.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hipólito Mejía Domínguez, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic.

President Mejía Domínguez (spoke in Spanish): The proposal to convene this Summit could not have been better timed or more auspicious, in that it offers

an opportunity for the community of nations to engage in a fruitful process of reflection on how to meet the challenges and needs of the new millennium.

Deliberating on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century means defining the expectations which Governments must try to fulfil at the international level, in a world that is calling increasingly for the practice of certain values in order to promote effective solidarity among all the peoples of the earth.

We Heads of Government should all thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for organizing this meeting and giving us this opportunity to deliberate on the issues covered extensively in the report which he has presented to this Millennium Summit.

Only a few days ago, on 16 August, I had the honour to be inaugurated as Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic. I have come to this high-level meeting, therefore, to very briefly describe some of the hopes and aspirations of the Dominican people.

Dignity of the human person, equality between men and women, social progress to improve living conditions, poverty eradication, a life of peace and hope without fear — these, briefly, are the aspirations and hopes of the Dominican people and the general framework within which the Dominican Government expresses its willingness and its determination to ensure that, in our country, the process of globalization of all humankind's cultural manifestations that characterizes this new millennium will have a genuinely human face.

While immersing ourselves in globalization and the market economy, we will never relinquish the demands of equity and social justice that flow from our hopes and aspirations.

If much-vaunted macroeconomic equilibrium is to be truly beneficial and equitable, then what we need are effective State institutions, transparent management of public affairs, respect for human rights, universal participation in decision-making on issues of universal concern and the creation of a sound physical infrastructure.

Only when we are able to design policies aimed at achieving those goals will we be in a proper position to join and operate in the global economy on competitive, equal terms. This, I repeat, is the attitude

which defines the aspirations and hopes of the present Government of the Dominican Republic.

My presence at this Summit is proof and confirmation of my country's faith in this Organization, of which the Dominican Republic has been a member since 1945. The Secretary-General's report, which seeks to define the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, is guided by an obvious commitment to reform and democracy. That is because, while the principles of the Charter of the United Nations have, over time, proved to be valid and, on many occasions, effective, it must be admitted that the power structures created for it in 1945 cannot meet the demands of the international relations that have evolved from the globalization process. Now, more than ever, this Organization must serve to strike the right balance among all the States of the earth.

Moreover, the necessary reform of the Charter of the United Nations must ensure that the globalization process benefits everyone, thereby transforming solidarity into a norm of international conduct that helps to uphold the general interest of the whole of humankind.

We are surely all agreed that the main responsibility for upholding the general interest and seeking to ensure the happiness of our peoples rests primarily with us and with the Governments which we lead, but it is not denying that responsibility to point out that often, both in the past and nowadays, our own guilt has been compounded by the guilty complicity of certain international interests.

On the basis of these considerations, I shall now refer to the situation currently faced by the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. We have often described the relationship between our two countries as a marriage with no possibility of divorce. We realize that it is basically Haiti's economic situation that is causing the daily influx of illegal immigrants from that country to ours, but the international community must also realize that the Dominican Republic does not have the capacity to shoulder the social burden represented by the presence of hundreds of thousands of our Haitian neighbours in our territory.

Our Government is doing its utmost to deal with this situation in a spirit of understanding and absolute respect for human rights. Any incidents that may be occurring in the border area are not part of a State

policy, and I can assure you that we have taken steps to deal with any troublesome situation.

The Government of the Dominican Republic is fully prepared to undertake jointly with Haiti development plans that will help to raise the standard of living of the residents of both countries.

The Dominican Republic will have an immigration law that is based on rational principles, applicable to all aliens without distinction living legally or illegally in its territory. However, it cannot solve on its own a problem that concerns all of us and which only a collective decision and collective participation can help to solve definitively. I therefore appeal to the United Nations and my fellow Heads of State to assume our collective responsibility for tackling this serious situation.

As I said earlier, the time has come for solidarity, and it is we Governments that must vow that the United Nations, faced with the process of globalization, will be the guarantor of the healthy material and spiritual development of all peoples and that the United Nations will be an implacable judge against violence, insecurity, prejudice and environmental degradation. Only thus, sharing the same hopes and aspirations, will we have peace.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Rwandese Republic.

President Kagame: With regard to the character of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, we share the general view that this noble institution is in need of renewal and reform to enable it to enjoy wider legitimacy. In carrying out that task, equal weight and urgency should be given to reforming other principal institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions. The United Nations system and those institutions are now faced with a far more complex social, economic and political environment than existed when they were founded more than 50 years ago.

In Rwanda's view, however, it is the issue of threats to peace that requires the most urgent attention. It is apparent that we are less threatened by world wars but are confronted by regional and localized conflicts and tensions. We need therefore to pose a question in that regard. Why have preventive and peacekeeping efforts been less than successful over the past decade? Many reasons have been put forward, including, for

example, lack of political will, ill-defined mandates, lack of means, and so on.

Those reasons may all be valid, but I want to add one more factor. That is, each conflict is unique in its history and in its sociology, something that does not often receive the attention it deserves. Nothing short of objective understanding of each conflict and its nature can contribute to its management and eventual resolution. If the case of Rwanda may be cited, an additional shortcoming is the inability or unwillingness to assist countries in post-conflict situations. International agencies seem more effective in reacting to humanitarian crises, but are wholly inadequate in assisting affected countries in the aftermath of conflicts. Yet, equally difficult challenges lie in the post-crisis phases, particularly in terms of economic and social reconstruction processes to permit sustainable development and thus to prevent further cycles of violence.

Permit me now to make a few remarks on the relationship between the United Nations and my country. Until its independence, Rwanda was administered as a United Nations trusteeship. The United Nations has since, to a greater or lesser extent, been associated with major political events in my country. As has been widely observed, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda must go down as one of the darkest hours in the more than 50-year history of the United Nations. It was in the aftermath of that event that the International Tribunal for Rwanda was created, and we support it in its commendable undertakings. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for commissioning a report on what happened in Rwanda in 1994. I congratulate the committee that undertook that assignment, led by the former Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Ingvar Carlsson. Submitted to the Security Council, and discussed by the Council on 14 April 2000, that painstaking report (S/1999/1257, annex), which speaks for itself, is clear in identifying responsibilities and ways and means of assisting Rwanda in its reconstruction programmes. Let me take this opportunity also to pay tribute to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Panel of Eminent Persons, under the leadership of President Masire, which arrived at conclusions similar to those of the Carlsson report.

The people of Rwanda have, since 1994, sought to rebuild their society under most difficult and challenging conditions. My Government is doing its

best to address these. But the task is not an easy one. We have made progress, thanks to the Rwandan people and to our partnership with bilateral and multilateral international agencies. Both the Carlson and OAU reports have recommended to their respective institutions ways to make this partnership effective. We look forward to the implementation of those recommendations; Rwanda will continue to play its part.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and of the Government of the Republic of Cuba.

President Castro (*spoke in Spanish*): Chaos rules in our world, both within borders and beyond them. Arbitrary laws are proffered as divine norms that will bring the peace, order, well-being and security that our planet so badly needs: that is what they would have us all believe. Three dozen developed and wealthy nations that monopolize economic, technological and political power have joined us here to offer us more of the same recipes that have succeeded only in making us ever poorer, more exploited, and more dependent.

There is no discussion whatsoever of a radical reform of this worn-out institution — born more than half a century ago when there were but a few independent countries — to transform it into a body that truly represents the interests of all the peoples of the world, an institution in which no one would have the frustrating and anti-democratic right of veto, and to undertake a healthy process of expanding the membership of the Security Council and enhancing its representativeness as an executive body subordinate to the General Assembly, which is the organ that should take the decisions on such crucial issues as intervention and the use of force. It must be firmly stated that the principle of sovereignty cannot be sacrificed to an exploitative and unfair order in which a hegemonic super-Power, backed by its own might, seeks to have its say on everything. That, Cuba will never accept.

The poverty and underdevelopment prevailing in the vast majority of nations as well as the inequality in the distribution of wealth and knowledge in the world are basically at the source of the present conflicts. It cannot be overlooked that the current underdevelopment and poverty are the consequences of the conquest, the colonization, the enslavement and the plundering of most countries of the planet by the

colonial Powers, of the emergence of imperialism and of the bloody wars to divide up the world in new ways. Today, it is the aggressor countries' moral obligation to compensate our nations for the damages they caused throughout centuries.

Humanity should be aware of what we have been so far and what we cannot continue to be. Our species has now enough accumulated knowledge, ethical values and scientific resources to move towards a new historical era of true justice and humanism.

Nothing in the existing economic and political order serves the interests of humankind. Thus this order is unsustainable and must be changed. Suffice it to say that the world has already more than 6 billion inhabitants, 80 per cent of whom live in poverty. Age-old diseases of the third world — diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and others equally lethal — have not been eradicated, while new epidemics like AIDS threaten to exterminate the population of entire nations. Meanwhile, wealthy countries keep devoting enormous amounts of money to military expenses and to buy luxury items, and a voracious plague of speculators exchange currencies, stocks and other real or fictitious values for trillions of dollars every day.

Nature is being devastated. The climate is changing under our own eyes, and drinking water is increasingly contaminated or scarce. The seas, a source of human sustenance, are being depleted, and crucial non-renewable resources are being wasted on luxury and vanities.

Everyone understands that the United Nations basic role in the new century now upon us is to save the world not only from war but also from underdevelopment, hunger, diseases, poverty and the destruction of the natural resources indispensable to human life. And the United Nations must do this promptly — before it is too late.

The dream of having truly fair and sensible norms to guide human destiny seems impossible to many. However, we are convinced that the struggle for the impossible should be the motto of this institution that brings us together today.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): I thank the President of the Council of State and of the Government of the Republic of Cuba.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic.

President Bongo (*spoke in French*): At this time when the nations of the world that we represent here are preparing to launch headlong into the third millennium, it is appropriate to reflect together on the future role the United Nations will play in meeting our new challenges.

I would like, therefore, to welcome and congratulate both of you — eminent individuals — who have been chosen to co-chair, in the spirit of solidarity and complementarity, this historic Summit. Allow me also to congratulate the Secretary-General for the relevant proposals that he has brought to our attention. They well serve to remind us of the large problems facing the world today. I am thinking here of the armed conflicts, AIDS and poverty that are seriously threatening the stability and development of our nations — in Africa in particular.

The conflicts that Africa is experiencing have gone on for so many years that we can talk about a permanent state of war. These conflicts disrupt our social, family, cultural and environmental balance. They destabilize our economies, compromise our development, hamper our freedoms and give rise to true humanitarian disasters.

In Africa humanitarian action is only in its infancy. We need to develop it with the ongoing support of the United Nations institutions and of the Member States, as well as with the support of the international-level non-governmental organizations which are already providing us valuable assistance.

Another problem that is threatening the stability of the continent is AIDS, which is attacking our workforce and the very structure of our societies. The fight against AIDS requires more intense international cooperation to adapt the prevention, treatment and scientific research programmes to the urgency and breadth of the task. Here I would just like to make an urgent appeal to facilitate access to care.

I feel convinced that our efforts to build a more peaceful and prosperous world will be successful if we continue to integrate them in a global logic of development. It is, moreover, in this spirit that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights attaches as much importance to economic, social and cultural

rights as it does to civil and political freedoms. It is thus of the greatest importance that the international community take the concerns of the vulnerable strata of our societies into greater consideration.

Another challenge that we need to meet is developing and providing access to science and new technologies. Here too, Africa, more than any other region of the world, will need special support.

The reform of our Organization fully falls within the current global context whose chief characteristic on the economic level is globalization. It also falls into the political framework through the march of values and democratic practice on all continents.

In our desire to give new dynamism to the United Nations, this democracy, representative of the majority and respectful of the minorities, must inspire our thinking. It is why I would not wish to conclude my statement without mentioning here Security Council reform. Indeed, 14 October 1977, at this very rostrum, as the then President of the Organization of African Unity, I asked that Africa have permanent representation on the Security Council. I call for the realization of this proposal, and I was very pleased to hear my brother, President Wade, speaking along these lines.

I conclude my statement on this note, convinced that as a result of this Summit, our Organization will emerge strengthened and more effective and that new and stronger solidarity will be born among States and the peoples.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

President Clerides (Cyprus): The Millennium Assembly, which rightly has gathered here an unprecedented number of heads of State and Government, is indeed a truly historic event. It is a significant effort to mobilize the forces of international cooperation at the highest possible level, an effort which we sincerely hope will give a strong impetus to the desire of humankind to construct a more just and secure world that will guarantee the survival, development and prosperity of the peoples of our planet.

Allow me to express my congratulations to those who initially conceived the idea of the Millennium

Assembly, and to thank particularly His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his thought-provoking report entitled "We the peoples". We look forward to an action-oriented final document of this important meeting, which will provide the blueprint for our common efforts in addressing the challenges that lie ahead.

We recognize that despite the many positive developments that have occurred on many fronts, ruthless conflicts, poverty and inequality are still commonplace in the world. The spread of endemic diseases should be a major call for mobilization for all of us. The principles of justice and international law should prevail when conflicts arise. Respect of human dignity and rights should be indiscriminate and unquestionable, while fundamental freedoms should be firmly embedded in all societies.

Globalization has accelerated the proliferation of global transactions, the increase in productivity, trade, technological advances and foreign investment. It has, however, created new challenges such as the widening of the gap between rich and poor, including the digital divide, the expansion of criminal networks and the illicit trafficking in narcotics and arms around the world.

The benefits of globalization need to be equally distributed around the world. The gap between rich and poor needs to be bridged before it widens even more. The greatest possible emphasis should be given to the needs of those less privileged, who are daily faced with the spectre of hunger, disease and the lack of opportunities. This is clearly in the interest of an increasingly interdependent world. It should not be forgotten that inequalities inexorably lead to conflicts.

The heavy burden of external debt is a major cause of concern for many countries. Imaginative policies of debt relief is a necessary component of any effort to secure poverty eradication.

The second part of the twentieth century has seen an international effort to protect human rights. Progress has been registered. However, we have a long way to go in order to fulfil this lofty goal. Despite the recent economic growth and social progress, hundreds of millions of people still live in poverty and misery. The natural resources of the planet are rapidly being depleted while the environment is continually degraded. Many countries lack access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Unemployment and income

inequality contribute to the deterioration of the fabric of many nations.

In particular, we should focus our efforts on securing the rights and setting the ground for greater advancement of less fortunate groups of our citizens. In this context, further efforts should be initiated in the areas of gender equality and children's rights, particularly of those children who so often pay a disproportionately high price in areas of armed conflict. We should institute effective policies in the pursuit of youth employment, as well as policies for disabled people who constitute one sixth of our planet's citizenry and who should have the opportunity to become fully engaged in, and contribute to, the development of our societies.

We deeply feel the pain and agony of the families of missing persons all over the world and in my own country, who are waiting to be informed of the fate of their missing loved ones in a convincing manner. Solutions based on political expediencies or considerations cannot give answers to this problem, the very existence of which constitutes an affront to the conscience of humanity. Humanitarian spirit, commitment and action by those who are in a position to give an answer to the relatives are what is needed.

From this forum, I wish to add my voice and strongly appeal to all concerned to cooperate in the struggle to end the agony and uncertainty of the relatives of each and every missing person.

The proliferation of armed conflict calls for our immediate attention. The ravages of war are nowhere more evident than in Africa, where the continuous outbreak of conflicts stands as a major obstacle to progress. Our Assembly should send a strong message regarding the need for a sustained policy of conflict prevention, peace-building, reconciliation and international cooperation.

While one often sees a tendency to pursue a "pragmatic" approach for the settlement of disputes, nevertheless it is our firm belief that the United Nations should always act based on the solid foundation of the principles of its Charter. This kind of approach will gain the confidence of its Members with regard to its objectivity and fairness and will lead to permanent solutions.

The Organization should always be a beacon of hope for small States that look to it for justice and by

concrete actions should alleviate their fears that political expediency, so often associated with the exercise of power politics, will not prevail over international law.

Security Council resolutions must be respected and implemented to safeguard international legality, so that the concept of collective security will sink deeply into our collective consciousness and find its practical application in full respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.

There is no more flagrant example of this failure in implementing resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council than the case of Cyprus, where numerous resolutions have remained unimplemented for over a quarter of a century. This failure constitutes nothing less than an affront to the international community and a glaring example of the prevalence of impunity.

We are now engaged in yet another effort to solve the Cyprus problem. I will participate in the forthcoming negotiation, as always, with good will and determination to find a just and viable solution within the parameters established by the United Nations resolutions, a solution that will meet the interests of, and restore and safeguard, the human rights of all Cypriots, without discrimination.

The framework for the construction of a better world is this very Organization of which we are all Members. Our guiding principles for the attainment of this goal are those enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We have the tools to proceed. What we absolutely need, however, is the political will to move forward.

Let us hope that this Millennium Assembly will strengthen our determination to work together in a spirit of solidarity in order to achieve the much desired goals of peaceful coexistence and prosperity in our common home, planet Earth.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic.

Mr. Guterres (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Globalization is a reality; it is not an option. But there is a choice, a choice between allowing it to develop in an unregulated manner, leading to social exclusion and an

increase of injustices at the global level, or, on the other hand, placing it under control so that its potential will be at the service of all.

The turn of a millennium is usually a time of visions of great Utopias. The great Utopia of our time would be a world in peace, with full respect for the rights of human beings, with international relations based on justice and fairness, without hunger and without poverty, and with a sustainable symbiosis between humanity and nature. It would be a world politically structured, multipolar and balanced.

Unfortunately, this is not our universe, and even to draw a picture of this Utopia seems naive.

In the face of the impossibility of great Utopias, it is important, nevertheless, to mobilize the international community to build many small Utopias to enact possible reforms of the architecture of international relations towards greater justice among individuals, peoples and generations. To regulate the globalization of economies and markets, improve world governance and re-establish the primacy of political ethics over interests: these are the core objectives of the international community at the turn of the millennium.

An international agenda must be taken up — an agenda of concrete reforms. I shall talk about six.

The first is reform of the Bretton Woods system, turning it into the great regulator of the global economic and financial system, giving it more means to intervene and a more humanized perspective combining the guarantee of financial solidity and the principles of good governance with a new emphasis on the social needs of peoples, resolving once and for all the debt problem of the poorest countries.

The second reform is to create codes of conduct and effective forms of supervision of financial flows, helping them to become more stable and predictable.

Thirdly, we should bring into the World Trade Organization (WTO), with care, social and environmental questions.

The fourth reform is to mobilize the energies of societies and institutions to combat infectious diseases, such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and to prevent "info-exclusion", the so-called digital divide, that threatens the new knowledge-based economy.

The fifth reform is to convert to firm commitments, at the global level, the directions being

progressively defined in world forums on the environment and sustainable development.

Sixthly, we should perfect international law and the means for its implementation in order to protect, ever more effectively, the sovereignty of the individual and to frame properly the right of humanitarian intervention. No aggressor should be able to count on the complacency of the international community, nor on the cynical invocation of the inviolability of its borders.

In the implementation of this agenda, due to their dimension and legitimacy, the United Nations and its agencies have a fundamental role to play.

The preparatory report to this Summit tells us that today humanity is united as much by the desire for peace as by the tragedy of war; as much by the spectacle of the most opulent wealth as by the most abject poverty; as much by the most creative freedom of expression as by the most brutal repression of belief; as much by the Internet as by HIV/AIDS.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies can and should function as the principal catalyst for international initiatives on the promotion of peace and human rights, but also of health, education, the protection of the environment, and equity in the international circulation and distribution of wealth and of access to information.

The reform and strengthening of the United Nations itself is, therefore, a key matter for our collective future. It should include, in my view, a profound effort to rationalize structures and means, reorganization and expansion of the Security Council itself and the creation of an Economic Security Council, as a catalyst for fairness, sustainable development and employment in the world economy. All must take their responsibility seriously in funding the United Nations. There must be an end to the hypocrisy of asking the United Nations to do what it does not have the means to achieve. It is important to demand efficiency of the Organization, but the resources necessary for it to act must also be made available.

The decisive importance of the United Nations has a living and eloquent symbol in East Timor. The victory of the Timorese cause constitutes a triumph of the rule of law over force and of international solidarity over *realpolitik* and indifference. At the same time,

East Timor is the place where, with success expected, one of the most ambitious and comprehensive operations in the history of the United Nations is being carried out. It is a good example of the importance of improving the mechanisms for the activities of the United Nations.

Here I would like to take the opportunity to express the support of my Government for the conclusions of the recently published Brahimi Panel report (A/55/305) on peace operations and to express the hope that there will be a constructive debate on the implementation of its recommendations.

As the Secretary-General states in his report, the values on which the twenty-first century should be based are freedom, solidarity, tolerance, non-violence, respect for the environment and natural resources and shared responsibility. Without those values, the international community, which we represent here today, cannot move forward to a future of dignity and prosperity for each and every one of its members.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bengali; English text furnished by the delegation*): The full text of my address has been circulated. Now I would like to read out only the highlights from it.

In a short span of human history, the world has changed beyond imagination. As we embark on our journey into the new millennium, hope and aspiration should steer us in overcoming the challenges. Our great leader, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led Bangladesh's 1971 war of liberation. He wanted to establish a happy and prosperous Golden Bengal, free from poverty, hunger, exploitation and deprivation. He made a historic speech at the United Nations in September 1974 in which he emphasized the need for peace, development, justice and equality — the same challenges that we face today.

Almost a year after he made that speech, he was assassinated, on 15 August 1975, along with most of the members of my family. My sister and I were the only survivors, as we were abroad. The killers and the conspirators had taken away fundamental human rights and destroyed democratic values. Their evil designs have, however, failed due to the commitment of our

people to democracy. The killers have been tried under the laws of our land, found guilty and sentenced. Some, however, have managed to get refuge in foreign lands. We firmly believe that the convicted murderers should be returned to our land to face justice.

I would like to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his millennium report, "We the peoples". His proposals in the four broad areas of poverty eradication, prevention of conflicts, environmental regeneration and renewal of the United Nations challenge world leaders to generate a new form of international cooperation.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, we should work unitedly to establish a just, fair, equitable and democratic global system. We need democracy for development and its equitable sharing. We should work together so that we can benefit from the process of globalization.

Peace is a prerequisite for development. Bangladesh considers peace a fundamental human right to be attained, sustained, promoted and carried forward all the time. A threat to peace anywhere in the world is a threat to peace everywhere. Thus, we call for the enthusiastic promotion of a culture of peace worldwide.

Ending discrimination and protecting the weak and the vulnerable are key to achieving justice and equality. We have put special emphasis on women, children and the weaker sectors of society.

We have taken innovative approaches towards poverty eradication, putting the people at centre stage. The success of microcredit programmes has been phenomenal in Bangladesh, along with advances in the specific areas of primary education, health care, population programmes and women's empowerment.

We are happy that the United Nations is looking afresh at the peace operations it undertakes. As a major troop-contributing country over the years and as an elected member of the Security Council, Bangladesh intends to take a proactive role in making peace operations more effective.

The security and welfare of people are the core concern of the United Nations. We must undertake sustained and concerted efforts to free our people from poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease. While microcredit and other poverty alleviation programmes

have been successful, much needs to be done to eradicate poverty.

There has been an outbreak of a malarial-type of disease called dengue in Bangladesh and other parts of our region. Many have been exposed to arsenic poisoning. Deadly diseases such as AIDS are spreading at an alarming pace. These maladies, which have regional and global dimensions, have to be confronted globally.

Let us all contribute to a strong and effective United Nations that can respond to the concerns of all. We hope that the Millennium Summit will generate new momentum for the United Nations, so that this Organization will be able to provide enhanced support for our efforts to eradicate poverty, empower people, attain population control, establish participatory democracy, preserve the environment, realize a nuclear-weapon-free world and promote a culture of peace.

May Bangladesh live forever. May the United Nations live forever.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Musharraf (Pakistan): We are passing through momentous times in the history of mankind. Just as every dawn inspires fresh hope and a new moon is an occasion for prayer and a new year for resolutions, so also the turn of the new millennium kindles hope for the future among humanity. For the first time in history, vistas are in sight for sufficiency and freedom from want.

In the last century, the blossoming of human ingenuity brought about a massive global transformation. However, the most remarkable achievement was the formation of the United Nations to uphold the ideals of justice, peace and prosperity.

This body has resolved many major disputes and conflicts. In recent years, United Nations intervention halted massive human tragedies in Bosnia and Kosovo. Wherever there has been a departure from the United Nations Charter and defiance of United Nations decisions, disputes have only festered, often leading to conflict. Of these, Kashmir and Palestine are the two prime examples, but with a difference. Whereas the international community and this world body are

seriously engaged in finding a solution to the Palestine issue, Kashmir cries for justice even after 52 years.

Pakistan is located in the world's most volatile region, where one fifth of humanity lives in a state of economic deprivation. While the global trend is towards economic progress through regional cooperation, South Asia is embroiled in conflict. Why this tragedy? Only because the people of Kashmir remain deprived of justice. The consequence of this injustice has been four wars. The region stands heavily militarized, even nuclearized. This situation is certainly not of Pakistan's making. We have been obliged to respond to the compulsions of our security and have merely acted in self-defence.

Kashmir, the root cause of tension, has to be resolved. Ten million people of the State cannot be denied their fundamental right to self-determination. The savage brutalities and killing of 70,000 people by 700,000 troops have only hardened their resolve. They seek the honouring of the pledges made to them by the United Nations. If the people of East Timor could be given their freedom, why not the people of Kashmir? When one party to a dispute is intransigent in rejecting the use of peaceful means, the Security Council is empowered to act. The problem lies not in the Charter, but in the lack of political will. Until we produce that will, all talk of crisis prevention and dispute resolution will ring hollow.

Pakistan stands for peace and is prepared to take bold initiatives to change the status quo through a dialogue with India at any level, at any time and anywhere. Let me confirm at this world forum that we desire a no-war pact; we are ready for a mutual reduction of forces; and we also seek a South Asia free from all nuclear weapons. Pakistan shall not be drawn into an arms race, nuclear or conventional, irrespective of provocation.

Pakistan remains conscious of international concern for democracy. Our founding father, the *Quaid-e-Azam*, envisioned Pakistan as a modern Islamic State committed to democracy based on equality, freedom and social justice. The people of Pakistan have never lost faith in democracy, but autocracy in the garb of democracy led to dishonest governance and the collapse of institutions. We stand sincerely committed to rebuilding and strengthening the institutions of state to give the country genuine and durable democracy.

A particularly dark aspect of the misrule damaging democracy in Pakistan has been corruption. Paradoxically, we have heard long lectures on democracy from countries which have laws that actually encourage corruption by giving ready asylum to plunderers and facilities for the concealment of illicit wealth in secret accounts in their banks. Such transfers will not make them much richer, but the poor will certainly become much poorer. Corruption is a transnational crime that calls for concerted international action. The United Nations should call for the banning of the transfers of ill-gotten wealth and demand cooperation in tracing and repatriating such funds.

The best assurance for the consolidation of global peace lies in the economic development and prosperity of all regions and all peoples. Economic progress in one region supports and complements prosperity in the other. The process of globalization and trade liberalization had raised hopes, but has caused disappointment. Global trade regimes make the rich North richer and the poor South poorer. This imbalance will further crush the developing countries under the increased burden of debt. The North, may I caution, cannot remain unaffected and will eventually get sucked into this vortex. The developing world needs the understanding and cooperation of creditor States and international financial institutions to dig themselves out from under this huge mountain of debt.

Pakistan will continue to work with other nations for a more effective and just United Nations, capable of rising above narrow interests to serve the greater cause of humanity. May the new millennium bring justice, peace and prosperity to all nations of the world.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Wim Kok, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Kok (Netherlands): First of all, I join the Secretary-General and others in expressing our profound condolences to the families and colleagues of the eight workers killed today in West Timor. It is exactly one year ago today that the Security Council desperately tried to prevail upon the Indonesian Government to act against the militias that were wreaking havoc in East Timor. It is tragic to note that, one year later, the same militias are still committing atrocities, this time in West Timor.

I want to add my voice to the voices of those who have already paid tribute to the Secretary-General's visionary and action-oriented report on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. We, the Member States, are crucial to any success or failure of the United Nations. Together we must determine what we want from the Organization, and each of us should be willing to invest politically and financially to enable the Organization to do what we want it to do. Not only do we need agreement on the core functions of the United Nations, but such agreement also requires a realistic assessment of its ability to perform them.

Reforms are well under way, but we can and must do more. At this Summit we must renew our efforts to bring prosperity, social justice and full recognition of human rights to all citizens of the world. Progress is needed on the issue of Security Council enlargement and reform. Progress is also needed to put the United Nations on a sound financial footing again.

Global governance needs to be strengthened to keep pace with the major challenges presented by globalization. The United Nations and other multilateral organizations and their member States have a pivotal task to perform if we are ever to tackle global concerns such as the spread of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Closing the gap between rich and poor is a task that cannot be left to the market or to individual countries. Globalization should go hand in hand with solidarity and security for all. The Secretary-General is right when he urges us to focus on measures to achieve freedom from want and freedom from fear. The persistence of extreme poverty is an affront to humanity.

The second World Water Forum, held in The Hague in March this year, agreed on realistic targets for achieving major improvements in the availability of safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. The Netherlands will continue its efforts to help achieve these targets, as well as the development targets agreed at the major United Nations conferences, by supporting United Nations organizations that function well; by urging multilateral organizations to introduce performance measurements; by promoting the formation of network alliances to ensure thematic and sectoral coordination at the global level; and, last but not least, by continuing to make its financial contributions.

Equally important is freedom from fear. The United Nations should be in a position to respond to a crisis in its early stages. Improving the Organization's peacekeeping capabilities is essential. The international rule of law needs to be strengthened. The International Court of Justice, the Yugoslavia Tribunal and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons — all located in The Hague — contribute to that goal. In the near future they will be joined by the International Criminal Court. The Netherlands has also offered to be host country for the Organization for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons.

Our endeavours to achieve freedom from want and freedom from fear for all should be guided and further inspired by the ideas in the Secretary-General's report, which draw on the United Nations Charter.

Finally, I would like to re-emphasize that ensuring a strong United Nations requires the combined efforts of all its Member States. The United Nations is not somebody else; the United Nations is us. The General Assembly can count on sound contributions and sustained efforts by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency The Right Honourable Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Ms. Clark (New Zealand): New Zealand is proud to reaffirm at this Summit its long-standing commitment to the principles and work of the United Nations. We have been a committed Member since the very beginning of the Organization. Our Prime Minister at that time, The Right Honourable Peter Fraser, played a significant role in framing the United Nations Charter. The Charter has stood the test of time as a framework for the conduct of relations between States and for the promotion of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

New Zealand places great importance on the rule of law and on the peaceful settlement of disputes. We have participated actively in the development of international law. This year we have responded to the Secretary-General's request to Member States to sign or ratify as many of the 25 core treaties as possible. We have also undertaken a full review of the extent of our participation in the international legal framework, with a view to becoming party to more treaties.

As a first step in that process, at this Summit we are carrying out seven fresh treaty actions, including signature or ratification of, or accession to, 5 of the 25 core treaties. This week, New Zealand is ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; acceding to the Convention to Combat Desertification; signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; signing the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and signing the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

We are also announcing our intention to become party to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by the time of Rio + 10, in mid-2002, and to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. By these actions we hope to demonstrate how seriously our small country takes the treaty-making process and international law.

New Zealand's key preoccupations in the work of the United Nations in the coming years will be on issues of disarmament and security, human rights, the environment and development. Our passion for nuclear disarmament is well known. In the 1980s we declared ourselves nuclear-free because of our belief in the immorality of nuclear weapons and because we knew that nuclear war would be a catastrophe for our planet. We have also dedicated ourselves to the hard, slow, painstaking work of advancing disarmament at the multilateral level. Years of working with others for a comprehensive test-ban treaty paid off. Now our goal, working with our partners in the "new agenda" grouping, is nothing less than the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The peacekeeping work of the United Nations is also a priority for New Zealand. My Government deplores the murders yesterday of United Nations relief workers in a West Timor refugee camp. I am gratified that New Zealand peacekeepers were able to evacuate many others to safety. I join other leaders in calling on Indonesia to act now to end this violence, and I endorse the Security Council's call for those responsible to be brought to justice. New Zealand also welcomes the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace

Operations, and looks forward to a strengthened United Nations peacekeeping capacity.

On human rights, New Zealand will seek in particular to protect and promote further the rights of women and of indigenous people. I also believe that the United Nations itself can play an even greater role in the promotion of women to leadership roles within its own Organization.

On the environment, meeting our commitments under the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change is a major challenge for New Zealand, but it is one we are determined to meet. The consequences of unchecked climate change are particularly severe for our South Pacific neighbours.

On development, the priority surely for the twenty-first century must be the needs of Africa. In Africa, conflicts have disrupted too many nations. Crisis and poverty together have held back economic development. On top of that, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has taken a heavy toll on human life.

The problems confronting Africa are a litmus test for the effectiveness and political will of the United Nations, its member countries and of African governments, as the "We the peoples" report implies. A better combination of programmes for debt relief, access to world markets for Africa's products, practical assistance for economic development and HIV/AIDS prevention, and good governance can make the difference for Africa.

Thank you for the opportunity to set out my country's priorities for working through the United Nations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. José María Aznar, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Aznar (Spain) (spoke in Spanish): How will history rate the performance of the United Nations? It seems most fitting at this time to pose this and many other questions: Has the United Nations effectively preserved humankind from the scourge of war? Has the United Nations clearly and positively influenced economic development around the world? Is the Organization able to manage appropriately the challenges of globalization?

In the light of these questions, let me remind some of the reckless critics of the Organization that we are the United Nations, and we, the Member States and their Governments, are the ones who influence its performance. So it behoves us to decide what we want the Organization to be in the coming century: whether we want a useful tool for meeting our objectives, or we want a very hollow forum.

The choice is ours to make. Now, as back in June 1945, we need a sincere consensus on the fundamental role of the United Nations in our time.

The original goal of the United Nations was to preserve the world from the scourge of war and remains so to this day. The Security Council is the cornerstone of a system, which strives to maintain international peace and security. It is therefore a priority to achieve Council reform through a broad-based consensus, avoiding dissension among Member States that would adversely erode its legitimacy.

Other aspects of the reform of the Security Council, its working methods and the power of veto, should be dealt with in a most rigorous manner because although the central role of the Council within the United Nations system is beyond question, humankind's ethical conscience has greatly evolved over time so that the international community will not sit idle in the presence of mass-scale atrocities and human rights violations wherever they may occur.

The principle of state sovereignty is the mainstay of the international community and no one intends to question this fact. By the same token, that very principle may not be used as a shield behind which those encouraging and abetting massive atrocities find cover. In our days, armed conflicts take their heaviest toll among civilian populations, namely women and children. We must therefore seek and define an understanding of those situations in which international reaction may not be thwarted by the exercise of the power of veto.

Any progress achieved by mankind during this violent twentieth century is owing to the fact that — even at a staggering high cost — the notion has prevailed that human dignity is deemed more valuable than the sanctity of the state.

Other than maintaining international peace and security, the United Nations has set out to achieve the goal of economic development for all. If we are to

build a more just and equitable world we must overcome poverty. The recent upsurge of economic growth and technological progress give us the best chance ever to achieve our goal. It would be unforgivable if we do not gather the means to do it.

We heartily support the objectives set out to this end in the Secretary-General's report for the Millennium Summit.

Let me in particular underline our commitment to achieving the goal set forth in the World Summit for Social Development of directing 20 per cent of our development aid to basic sectors such as education, health care, housing and employment policies.

These are the tools that help primarily those in need and lift them up from poverty. Specifically, equal opportunity in education worldwide may open new doors for new and more confident generations. We are fully aware of the valuable role played by different social and civic endeavours, in particular non-governmental organizations, in implementing cooperation projects.

The last challenge before the United Nations, and the most current one, is related to the amazing process of global integration driven by the new technologies. Endless possibilities are at hand for building a more independent and evolved world. The United Nations should enhance the many positive sides of globalization to prevent the weakest among us from being left behind.

Globalization certainly creates new challenges, among which the need to protect and preserve the environment for future generations, the fight against organized international crime, the establishment of an international criminal justice system, and also finding a cure for globally spread diseases.

Spain will vigorously support all efforts to find consensus solutions to all these problems and to uphold the relevant agreements. Specifically, ratification by my country of the Rome Treaty establishing an International Criminal Court is very near, and we trust that it will be implemented promptly.

The manifold addresses during this Summit are laying down the challenges facing our Organization in the coming years. The Secretary-General's report no doubt stands as a suitable and revealing proposal for analysis of the future. Thus, let us all be convinced and therefore provide the means to make the United

Nations in the new century the indispensable and useful tool to secure a better world for us all.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of Belgium.

Mr. Verhofstadt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to thank the Secretary-General for the report he presented for this historic meeting. It is an excellent report, and the report that we needed. Not only does it describe the major challenges, but above all it also sets out clear and precise objectives. Belgium fully supports it. My country commits itself here and in other international institutions of which it is a member to support all actions that can help attain those objectives.

I would like to discuss two of the major challenges that figure in the report of the Secretary-General: the peacekeeping role of the United Nations, and the worldwide scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Turning first to the Organization's peacekeeping missions, such missions have been on the increase for more than 40 years now. This, indeed, has become the Organization's natural vocation. The net result of these operations has, unfortunately, not been positive — and I am speaking with circumspection. In many cases, these operations have been true debacles. The darkest pages were written in Rwanda, where genocide was committed before the indifferent eyes of us all, including my country. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were slaughtered. Ten Belgian "blue helmets" lost their lives in that operation. Belgium has sought to learn the lessons of that tragedy. I note with satisfaction that many of those lessons have a place in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Brahimi. Moreover, those lessons are in line with the observations and conclusions of the Organization of African Unity on this matter.

I wish in particular to highlight the need to guarantee that the quality and quantity of the troops and equipment provided will be sufficient, on the basis of the most pessimistic scenario; to formulate clear, credible and flexible mandates that can quickly be adapted to the situation on the ground; to involve troop-contributing countries in the formulation of mandates; to provide the proper preparation, information and training to troops in peace operations; to improve resources for organization, information and

planning; and to make the chain of command and the relationship between the theatre of operations and the Secretariat less bureaucratic.

But however much to the point these recommendations may be, even the full implementation of the Brahimi report would not be enough to prevent tragedies like those that took place in Rwanda, Srebrenica and Somalia. We would still be faced with applying the recommendations, as well as with the difficulty of recruiting troops and with their late deployment on the ground. We must therefore go further in our thinking. I believe that we need a new concept of peacekeeping. That means forming standing, ready-to-deploy regional peace-operation capabilities. These, which should be of brigade size, would be set up by the States of a region and would be materially and financially supported by the United Nations. As members know, the European Union is creating a rapid reaction force that will be operational in 2003. In a way, the new concept would be an attempt to make that initiative a general one by establishing a rapid reaction force in each region of the world. This certainly would not imply the disengagement of the Western countries; to the contrary, in addition to forming their own rapid reaction forces, those countries would help financing the equipping and training of such regional capabilities — obviously, under the control and responsibility of the United Nations.

The tragedy of AIDS has grown alarmingly: 36 million human beings have been afflicted, some two thirds of them in sub-Saharan Africa. As in all of history's major epidemics, the uncontrolled spread of AIDS is exacerbated by poverty, ignorance, dogmatism, social exclusion and non-recognition of the rights of women — and, it must be said, by the refusal of some leaders to face the facts. The goals and time-frames set out in the report of the Secretary-General must be met at any cost. Let us be clear: the only possibility for meeting those goals and time-frames is for the rich countries substantially to increase the resources allocated for prevention, for the distribution of medicines and for the development of a vaccine.

With respect to access to basic treatment, Belgium has decided, in close cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), to provide four African countries with an assortment of medicines worth 250 million Belgian francs. Direct distribution to patients, which will begin this year, will take place through existing primary

health-care structures. Clearly, these basic medicines must reach the poorest of the ill. In the same spirit, Belgium has decided to increase its budget for AIDS research by 150 million Belgian francs.

I conclude by firmly endorsing the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to reform the Security Council without delay. This has been under discussion for seven years now, and I think it is time to conclude. To that end, it is urgent to give up positions that are too conservative or that are utterly unrealistic: those, for example, that defend the status quo on the one hand, and, on the other, those that would open the Council to new categories of membership to the point where it would nearly resemble the General Assembly. As members know, Belgium is coordinator of a group of Member States that has made realistic, practical proposals that would expand the Council by five permanent members and five non-permanent members, with equitable geographical distribution. Belgium would clearly be open to proposals along those lines.

The Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Marco Antonio de Oliveira Maciel, Vice-President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. Maciel (Brazil) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation furnished by the delegation*): Let me begin by expressing our strongest condemnation of the attack by Timorese militias on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office at Atambua, West Timor. Our deepest sympathy and condolences go to the bereaved families, and we express our sincere wish that those injured may recover speedily.

It gives me great satisfaction to convey to this historic Summit the greetings of the President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and of the entire Brazilian nation. I am confident that the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, and President Sam Nujoma of Namibia, the Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit, will provide inspired and firm guidance as we conduct our deliberations. I also salute Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose experience and breadth of vision of world affairs have been crucial to the strengthening of the United Nations.

The Millennium Summit offers a propitious opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to international peace and security, the observance of human rights, respect for international law, protection

of the environment, the eradication of poverty and the well-being of all. These are goals that can only be achieved in the wake of economic and social development.

The United Nations has a key role to play in achieving these objectives. There is no alternative to the path laid out by the Organization if we are to foster the ideals of liberty, equality, solidarity and tolerance among peoples. The United Nations has increasingly become an indispensable tool in our collective endeavours to overcome the challenges of the modern world.

The establishment of the United Nations is one of the great legacies of the twentieth century. The time has come to revitalize it, to ensure that it mirrors the contemporary state of global affairs and the trend towards greater democracy in international relations. We must reform the Security Council to make it more representative, effective and legitimate. No longer can we tolerate anachronistic decision-making structures that are not only selective, but fail to reflect the dynamics of worldwide transformations of the last few decades.

It is imperative to prevent the creation of an environment conducive to unilateral actions falling outside the framework of the United Nations Charter and international law. It is also imperative to renew within the United Nations the debate on the critical issue of economic, social and cultural development.

Brazil shares the view of Secretary-General Kofi Annan that extreme poverty is an affront to humanity. Poverty eradication, access to education, the supply of basic health services and sustainable development require a concerted effort on the part of the entire international community. Globalization should be a means for creating a world of greater solidarity and, therefore, a world that is less asymmetrical. We appeal to the developed countries to move ahead with debt-reduction initiatives benefiting the poorest countries. Such measures will undoubtedly help to bring on stream educational programmes geared to the requirements of the needy, in particular by widening the access of poor children to basic schooling.

By the same token, the United Nations cannot remain aloof in view of the need to ensure access to science and technology and to ensure that this access is more democratic, so as to enable all the peoples of the world to share in the information age. The United

Nations must assist in efforts to remove restrictions on developing countries playing a more active role in the world economy.

As we the leaders from all parts of the world gather to reaffirm our collective commitments, let us bear in mind the significant efforts being made to enhance coordination at the regional level. In this respect, allow me to refer to the holding last week — for the first time in our history — of a meeting of the Presidents of all the countries in South America. The success of this "Meeting of the Presidents of South America", held in Brasilia, reinforces the prospects for the consolidation of a regional zone of prosperity, where our countries will be able to address common challenges and opportunities. I am convinced that the outcome of the gathering in Brasilia constitutes a meaningful contribution, from our perspective, to the dynamics of regional integration, which is crucial in these times of globalization.

Mr. Gurirab (Namibia) took the chair.

The Brasilia Meeting highlighted priorities of the region. Our commitment to democracy was enhanced. We underscored our conviction that the improvement of infrastructure geared to regional integration, the strengthening of our trade ties, closer technical and scientific cooperation, and the fight against drug trafficking and related crimes are decisive measures which will foster comprehensive regional development. Finally, as a reaffirmation of the peaceful aspirations of the countries of the region, we agreed to establish a South American zone of peace.

We are convinced that the Millennium Summit will be a watershed in our endeavours to build a better world. If we are to achieve this goal as we enter the twenty-first century, it is essential that we bring new vigour and strength to the United Nations.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency The Honourable Billie Miller, Member of Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

Mrs. Miller (Barbados): In the 34 years since our independence we have striven for nothing less than to define our identity out of the crucible of a history that encompasses the darkest episode in human relations. We in Barbados and the Caribbean are, in truth, the people of this millennium. We did not exist in the first

millennium. Those who inhabited our islands then were extinguished by the desolation of early colonialism. Their lives remain a mystery to us, decipherable only through a few pieces of stone and remnants of folklore. The present people of the Caribbean are the new people of the New World.

We identify ourselves at the cusp of two millennia as a sovereign nation whose level of prosperity, education and well-being have been attained at high cost. We have not come to this point in our development easily or by chance, supported in every aspect by preferences and special dispensations, as some would have you believe. We come to this place and time through endeavour and sacrifice.

Our expectation when we became a Member of this Organization was that we would become part of an assemblage that would protect our territorial integrity, support our sovereignty and assist us in our quest to realize the full potential of our citizens. Membership in the United Nations, the original and largest of experiments in multilateralism, was both practical and symbolic for us.

Barbados has a perspective on multilateralism that is inherently positive. We understand it as interdependence in the management and sustainable development of our planet and our peoples. We know it as offering the opportunity for collaborative decision-making based on shared information, and we believe in its precepts of mutual respect and mutual benefit.

It would seem, however, that these tenets are no longer held to be sacred by all of us. Debate continues on the worthiness of multilateralism as a natural evolutionary development in the relationship between countries. The United Nations is at the heart of this argument. There is no denying that faith in the United Nations to deliver on its myriad mandates is too often in doubt. Lack of trust in the system has led to apathy among the majority. This has given rise to a disquieting tendency to flout the moral authority of the United Nations, endanger its agents for peace and development, and undermine its credibility and effectiveness as global arbiter and guardian of human progress.

The experience of Barbados with multilateralism has been diverse and pervasive. We are inheritors of membership in the Commonwealth of Nations. Our relations with Africa and the Pacific have been conducted largely within the unique forum of the

African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. In our own hemisphere we have become an integral part of the Summit of the Americas process. And, of course, the fraternity and interdependence between our countries in the Caribbean Community needs no amplification.

In the midst of all our positive perceptions, however, there is growing anxiety and unease. We have noticed a tendency by the large and mighty members of the world community to exploit the very laudable precepts of the United Nations to maintain an unjust status quo or to impose unpalatable conditionalities on peaceful coexistence.

The list of issues that are undermining Barbados' position in that hard-won niche we have carved for ourselves continues to grow. The efforts of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to direct our tax regimes and that organization's blacklisting of the offshore financial centres of small economies is a case in point. So too is the severe pressure within the Free Trade Area of the Americas for liberalization of financial markets, as is the refusal of those culpable to accept responsibility for massive environmental degradation and to put real resources in place to redress that damage.

True equity and true reciprocity need an equitable balancing of every aspect of multilateral transaction.

Barbados came to the United Nations with clean hands and a clear conscience. We had no differences with our neighbours that were reconcilable only by war. We had no designs on our neighbours' territory and no ambitions to dictate to others the way in which they should, within the parameters of the United Nations Charter, manage their affairs and determine their destinies. We remain a small, peace-loving nation, guided on our course by the lodestar of democratic principles, parliamentary governance and respect for the human rights of our citizens. Our ambition remains to safeguard and build on what we have so far earned and to have, in the global scheme of things, more than just a vote.

We wish for the United Nations to assume responsibility for integrating into the world multilateral system the small States of this planet, which expect and, indeed, have a right to be an active and effective part of the processes of global governance. To fail to act now would deny us a future of prosperity and fulfilled human potential. We are not expected to

complete this task, but neither are we at liberty to abstain from it.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Namibia): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Chairman of the delegation of Samoa.

Mr. Slade (Samoa): By brave experiment five decades and more ago, we sought a better world: a hoped-for new order premised on peace, justice and well-being for all.

That today we are able to meet as a vastly transformed, near-universal United Nations bears testimony to vision and endeavour. This Summit is an occasion for rededication to the spirit of that endeavour.

But developments of the past half century have not yielded full dividends for all nations, nor for all peoples. The promises of the Charter remain unfulfilled. All over the world, core values and the human condition are under assault, constantly, shamefully. Far too many are in torment because of hunger and disease. We remain a world that needs to be far better. This Summit must therefore be a recommitment to human values.

It is also an occasion to renew commitment to the purposes of the Organization. Samoa does so as a small country and with abiding faith in the principles of the Charter. The principles are sound. They are as true today as at the inception, and they provide for an expanding future. What needs to be established is the political determination for applying the principles.

The Organization remains uniquely suited to the pursuit of human values and objectives and the coordination of global activities. But, of course, it needs to change and to adapt.

The Security Council, in particular, must be able to respond to the requirements of a fundamentally different international setting. It needs to be reformed comprehensively to meet contemporary demands and the conditions of the world today.

The membership of the Security Council must be enlarged to reflect the realities of the present time and to enhance its representative role and effectiveness.

We believe very deeply in the sustaining power of international law in support of the principles of the Charter. The United Nations is an essential and

cohesive force in the elaboration of international law and rules for international cooperation which now regulate a phenomenal range of human activity.

Samoa gives its fullest endorsement to the most timely initiative of the Secretary-General and his call for universal participation in the multilateral treaty framework, especially in connection with those treaties that are representative of the key objectives of the Organization.

The desire of my country for effective disarmament and the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is well known. Such weapons represent the great paradox of our time: while nations desire peace, and talk of peace, far more of the national wealth goes towards the development and acquisition of ever more sophisticated and ever more destructive weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear weapons, in particular, reach beyond the paradox to impose a global curse. Their continuing existence poses the gravest of threats to international security and to global human survival. Samoa gives the fullest support to the Secretary-General's proposal for convening a major international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

Samoa believes most strongly in the need for and the purposes of the International Criminal Court, and will continue to play its part in the development of the Court. Humanity needs more than ever a fair, effective and independent instrument of international criminal justice.

For the safeguarding of human rights, all nations, working together, need to persist with efforts to promote tolerance and understanding. The fact is that we are all of one human family. Our diversity of race and culture should pose no threat. Rather, it should be seen as the fountainhead, offering vast potential for mutual enrichment and fundamental freedoms. Freedom is the natural beat of every human heart; democracy the measure of its expression. We need to ensure unquestioned acceptance of the dignity and equality of all and full respect for their human rights.

Poverty must be made a high-priority millennium challenge. Too many are at risk. Some are as poor today as they were 20 years ago. This is an appalling fact, especially at a time when economies and income levels are at their highest peaks in many other countries.

Poverty is first and foremost a problem of development. In addressing it we need to address the interlinking crises of public health, agricultural productivity, environmental degradation and demographic stresses. It is impossible to develop a nation without a healthy and trained population. Disease and malnutrition will compound despair.

The global environment is under severe stress. Human activity is very largely the cause. Serious natural disasters have become more the norm than the exception. The consequences for a small vulnerable country like my own have a direct impact on life-support systems and the well-being of communities and the national economy. The effects are destructive, and they are lasting.

For Samoa and other small island States, no phenomenon is more threatening in its consequences and risks than climate change.

Small island States are doing what they can to contribute to the international climate change negotiations and to efforts to combat this problem and to design response mechanisms. We played our part in

negotiating the Kyoto Protocol, which is an important first step, and we are committed to bringing it into effect as quickly as is possible.

The sustainable development of small island developing States was the focus of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, last year. It is a matter of obvious priority for Samoa and the Alliance of Small Island States.

The twenty-second special session produced specific and very practical measures for addressing the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island States aimed at enhancing capacities for national self-assurance and economic self-sufficiency. This objective, we believe, has an important and enduring message for other developing countries. We urge the international community to give these matters full and timely attention.

With its legacy and lessons of the old century, and the infinite promise of the new millennium, Samoa believes very deeply that the future is very much on the side of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.